

# Around the House



NEWS FROM THE HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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MARCH/APRIL, 2009

## Public Housing High Rises Are Going Green!

Your Public Housing program is going green—and we don't mean they're putting on leprechaun suits! As of this March, Public Housing's Modernization Program has completed a one year project to install 95% efficient boiler systems at Greenway and McLean Manor with the assistance of the South Central Kansas Economic Development District (SCKEDD). The systems were designed by Professional Engineering Consultants, P.E. and the installations were completed by two separate contracting firms. SCKEDD provided some funding for the new boilers and all of the weatherization improvements. SCKEDD staff also replaced incandescent

light bulbs with high efficiency compact florescent light bulbs in all of Public Housing's 226 apartment units, including Rosa Gragg and Bernice Hutcherson Garden Apartments.

The new boilers are rated as 95% efficient, compared to the aged boilers that operated around 65% efficiency. In addition to the actual boilers, they are now operated by automated electronic controls. Since the boilers are only running when needed in the two high-rises, not only is there a savings on lower natural gas usage when they are operational, but they are only operating when there is a need for heat in the buildings.

The new systems also provide greater comfort to residents, since the building should not be over-heated during fall and spring months, as they were in the past with manual control systems. Residents will still be able to control their individual temperatures in their individual apartments. The high temperatures in the hallways and common areas have been a source of resident complaints for years. Public Housing looks forward to the future by saving some of Earth's natural resources, while providing a more comfortable living environment for our residents.



## More Public Housing Construction!

In addition to the energy improvements for Public Housing high rise properties, improvements are also on the way for single family residences. The economic stimulus package which was recently approved by Congress, provides additional funds for

Public Housing capital projects. Some of the projects which are being considered for this funding, will also address energy needs such as energy-efficient replacement windows. This is in addition to three new single family homes which are being constructed to

add to the Public Housing inventory. These homes are being built to Energy Star standards as well. Our goal is energy efficiency to reduce operating costs and to save our environment. Look for energy tips in this newsletter for ways you can help!

**Your  
Housing  
Authority is going  
GREEN  
and it has nothing to  
do with  
St. Patrick's Day!**



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## Around the House

### From the Director



**Mary K. Vaughn** invites readers to submit questions related to department programs for a new feature: **Ask the Director!**

Last month I invited you to submit questions to me about your Housing Authority. I received one question—and it has to do with our maintenance services for Public Housing. The question was whether we use broken parts to fix broken items—the answer is NO! If the person who wrote that would call my secretary and leave their name, we'll get someone out to make sure the repairs are done correctly! Our goal is quality, customer service!

You can help us maintain our

properties too! During HUD's recent inspection visit they found several instances where switch plate covers had been removed by tenants in Public Housing. I understand this is also a problem with Section 8 rental units. This is a very dangerous practice and I am asking you to stop doing that! The cover is there to protect electrical wiring. If the wiring is exposed, children or pets are at risk. Please do not remove these covers.

Another thing the inspector continues to find, is blocked

exit areas. This is also a safety issue. If a fire occurs and you cannot use the front door to exit, you must have an alternative exit route. If that is a window and there is furniture in front of it, your exit will be delayed if not worse.

Please keep in mind that once you are living in a unit, you are responsible for making sure it is safe—by your own actions and by reporting problems to Public Housing Maintenance or your landlord.

*Mary K. Vaughn*

### ENERGY TIP:

USE ENERGY  
STAR QUALIFIED  
LIGHT BULBS—  
THEY USE 75%  
LESS ENERGY  
THAN STANDARD  
BULBS AND THEY  
LAST LONGER!

## \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ JOBS AND TAX CREDITS \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$

The U.S. Census Bureau is looking for workers to help with the 2010 census. Jobs could pay as much as \$10/hour. This would be temporary work which includes paid training. To find out more call:

1-866-861-2010

Or go online at:

[Kansas\\_city\\_2010\\_recruiting@census.gov](mailto:Kansas_city_2010_recruiting@census.gov)

Lifeguard Jobs are available through the City of Wichita. Students 15 years and older can apply. Training will take place in March and April. Contact Barbara McGuire at 268-4361 for more information or go to one of the following Recreation Centers, Mon-Fri, from 9 am to noon and 3-7 pm: McAdams, Colvin or Evergreen.

### Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Don't forget to apply for the Earned Income Tax Credit. The EITC is available for persons who worked during 2008 and meet certain income guidelines. To find free help with tax preparation, call:

**2-1-1**



### Our Employee Values

- ◆ Respectfully helping others achieve safe, affordable housing
- ◆ Empowering people and improving neighborhoods
- ◆ Making a difference—right where people live
- ◆ Investing in people with their housing needs

### Employee News!

The Housing and Community Services Department welcomed one new employee in January. Caress Adams joined the department as a member of the Prisoner Reentry team. You may recall that the department is a part of a team that includes City, County and State staff whose job it is to ensure that persons

returning to Wichita from Kansas prisons, receive follow up services to make their adjustment to the community a successful one. Caress' role on the team is to help the ex-offenders identify housing options for themselves and their families, and give them pointers on being a successful tenant.

Caress goes into the prisons and provides training before the ex-offenders are released. And she follows up on them when they come home. The department is excited about the opportunity to serve this population; our entire community benefits from this program!

## Hard Work Pays Off for Family Self-Sufficiency Members

The Family Self-Sufficiency program (FSS) of Section 8 completed a successful 2008! According to a year-end report prepared for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 71 new families enrolled, and 17 families completed their FSS Contracts of Participation in 2008. Five of those graduates also became homeowners with the assistance of our Homeownership Program. A total of \$66,563 in Escrow Account funds were disbursed to 12 of those families whose

*Earned Income* had increased during their FSS Contract period. Escrow Account balances grow in direct relationship to your Earned Income increases (i.e. wages). The data revealed that wages for newly employed and currently employed FSS participants increased by \$445,849 on an annualized basis. In addition, welfare cash assistance for those families who were active in the program at year end had decreased by \$64,992. If you are a Section 8 client who's interested in improving

your employment possibilities, AND you like the idea of having a "nest egg" accumulate for your family, come into our office and complete an FSS pre-enrollment form. Your dreams can become your reality.



Family Self-Sufficiency  
Workshops  
Atwater Neighborhood  
City Hall  
2755 E 19th  
6:00 pm  
  
March 26  
April 16

Section 8 Homeowners  
Alumni Meetings  
Atwater Neighborhood  
City Hall  
2755 E 19th  
5:30 pm  
  
April 20

## Section 8 Tenants and Landlords—Take Note!

### New Utility Allowances-2009

Each year the Housing Authority is required to review utility rates and usage, to determine appropriate utility allowances. Staff have completed that analysis and the Housing Authority Board approved the changes. The new schedule goes into effect on May 1, 2009 for new clients and families relocating to a different unit. It will be

effective for current clients at recertification dates after August 1, 2009. You can view the new schedule on the City's website.

### Rent Reasonableness Form

Landlords will see a new (blue) form in the Request for Tenancy Approval Packet as of February, 2009. The form is an opportunity for the landlord to provide informa-

tion on newly renovated dwellings or enhancements to their property. Property amenities such as dishwasher, garage, washer/dryer or fireplace, can also be noted. Completion of this form will assist the Section 8 office in determining appropriate rent levels and payment standards. Please remember to complete this form!

### ENERGY TIP:

TENANTS—REPORT  
WATER LEAKS  
IMMEDIATELY!  
LANDLORDS—PLEASE  
FIX WATER LEAKS  
IMMEDIATELY!

- LEAKY FAUCETS WASTE UP TO 2,000 GALLONS OF WATER EACH YEAR
- LEAKY TOILETS CAN WASTE UP TO 200 GALLONS OF WATER EACH DAY

## HAP Payment Schedule

MONTH	CHECK MAIL DATE
March, 2009	February 27, 2009
April, 2009	March 31, 2009
May, 2009	April 28, 2009
June, 2009	May 29, 2009



Don't forget to sign up for direct deposit of Housing Assistance Payments for fast access to your funds! Go to [www.wichita.gov](http://www.wichita.gov) and click on the Finance Department. From there you will see a link for Automated Clearinghouse (ACH). Click there and follow the 3 simple steps.

**Mission .. To provide housing & related services to benefit the citizens & neighborhoods of Wichita**

## HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

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**We're On the Web!**  
[www.wichita.gov/cityoffices/housing](http://www.wichita.gov/cityoffices/housing)

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**NEWS  
YOU CAN  
USE!!**

## Homeownership Program Accepting Applications

The City of Wichita HOMEownership 80 Program provided 37 families with downpayment and closing cost assistance to purchase a home last year, and over 900 families since the program started in 1993.

The "HOME 80" Program is federally funded with HOME Investment Partnerships Program and the American Dream Downpayment Initiative.

"HOME 80" assistance is an interest-free deferred payment loan. A second interest-free, deferred payment loan, which is forgiven after 5 years, is available for minor rehabilitation of the home in

order to improve building code compliance.

Additional down payment assistance is available if you purchase a newly constructed home from one of our non-profit Community Housing Development Organizations: Mennonite Housing, Power CDC, Community Housing Services, or Wichita Indochinese Center. "HOME 80" Program assistance can also be used with Habitat for Humanity programs.

You must complete a homeownership training class with one of our designated providers, in order to receive assistance from the Program: Mennonite Housing Services (942-4848);

Community Housing Services, (685-2656); and Urban League of Kansas (262-2463). Feel free to contact one of these agencies to make arrangements for attending a class.

HOME 80 Program assistance may be utilized in conjunction with other assistance programs, such as the Section 8 Homeownership program, and the Sedgwick County Mortgage Revenue Bond Program.

If you are interested in HOME 80 contact us at 462-3766 for an application package, visit our website at [www.wichita.gov/housing](http://www.wichita.gov/housing). It's never too early to get started!